

## **DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY**

**Client/Project:** South Mountain Corridor Study Citizens Advisory Team

**Date:** February 26, 2004   **Time:** 5:30 p.m.   **Location:** Vee Quiva Casino

### **CAT Members Attending:**

Rock Argabright, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber  
Carlie Billen Back, South Mountain Chamber  
Kris Black, Ahwatukee Foothills HOA  
Chad Campbell, Sierra Club  
Ron Chohamin, Lakewood HOA  
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee  
Michael Goodman, Phx Mtns Preservation Council  
Don Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce

Rudy Martinez, Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee  
Robert Moss, United Arizona Dairymen  
Wayne Nelson, GRIC District 7  
Nathaniel Percharo, I-10 Pecos Landowners  
Barbara Schneider, South Mountain Village  
Julia Shepard, City of Tolleson  
Jim Strogon, Kyrene de los Logos Elementary School  
Dave Williams, Knight Transportation

### **Staff and Consultants Attending:**

Thor Anderson, ADOT  
Vaughn Bennett, AMEC  
Amy Edwards, HDR  
Pete Eno, ADOT  
John Godec, GRA  
Theresa Gunn, GCI

Bill Hayden, ADOT  
Andrea Love, HDR  
John Roberts, GRIC  
Floyd Roehrich, ADOT  
Jose Solarez, GRIC  
Bill Vachon, FHWA

**Meeting Summary:** Debbie Fink, GCI

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### **ACTION PLAN:**

<b>Task/Activity</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When</b>
Bring MAG RTP brochures to the next meeting	Bill Hayden	April 22
Contact City to discuss bike trail to the new park	HDR	
Follow-up with Rock to see if Dobson is becoming a full diamond.		
ADOT.FHWA research process on how right of way purchase would happen on GRIC lands so that District reps can share info with their residents.		

### **Meeting Handouts:**

- Agenda
- ADOT Your Property Your Highways
- ADOT Relocation Assistance Program
- SMCAT Roster

- Ahwatukee Foothills News Article 2/6/04
- AMEC Utilities Overview

## **Welcome and Introductions:**

John Godec called the meeting to order and welcome the members and introduced the new members: Julia Shepard, City of Tolleson and Rudy Martinez, Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee.

## **CAT Member Comments/Concerns:**

**Question:** Who put barricades at the end of Pecos Road? I think it sends a bad message.

**Response:** There was a lot of cut-through traffic cutting fences and leaving trash on the tribal lands. The City of Phoenix installed the barricades.

**Comment:** South Mountain Community College is seeking a 20-acre site between 48<sup>th</sup> Street and 52<sup>nd</sup> Street on tribal lands south of Pecos. What is the impact to the current freeway easement? **Response:** ADOT is aware and meeting with MCCCCD. The tribe is considering site that would work for freeway alternatives.

**Comment:** Concern about light rail debates defeating the sales tax extension. What will be the impact on this project? **Response:** The bill signed by the Governor includes light rail and the plan will go to the voters as a complete package.

**Question:** What is the language on the ballot regarding the South Mountain Freeway?

**Response:** The map states that South Mountain freeway location is under study.

**Question:** Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee is discussing a bike trail to the new park. How would that work with the freeway? **Response:** HDR will contact the city to discuss the bike trail.

**Question:** We have critical bottlenecks. How do we determine priority of new freeways versus improving local bottlenecks? **Response:** Plans to widen I-10 from Phoenix to Tucson are underway. Projects are constricted by availability of funding. 2007-2009 will hopefully see the widening projects underway. There are not sufficient funds to do everything.

## **Project Status:**

Bill Vachon reported on the status of the Federal Highway funding reauthorization legislation.

- Congress has yet to act on the reauthorization.
- There is a debate going on how to streamline existing 106 and 4F regulations.
- 4F states that an agency can't take public lands, parks, etc. unless a reasonable and prudent alternative.
- We don't know at this time if any changes to 4F will be included.

**Question:** If 4F is left, out what does it do to this study? **Response:** FHWA would have to change our regulations before the change would take effect. Change probably would not be in place before the South Mountain EIS is complete.

### **Opening SMCAT Meetings to the Public:**

John referred to a guest commentary from the Ahwatukee Foothills News requesting that the SMCAT meetings be opened to the public. The group discussed whether or not they wanted to open the meetings to the public.

- After lengthy discussion the CAT decided to open meetings to the public. Member of the public may submit written comment but will not be allowed to speak.
- The group discussed new location possibilities:
  - Stay at the casino
  - New City of Phoenix facility
  - Caesar Chavez High School
  - Bougainvillea Golf Club

### **Public Involvement Update:**

Theresa Gunn stated that the team had been invited to make presentations at upcoming meetings of the I-10 Pecos Road Landowners and the Ahwatukee Foothills Homeowners Association Annual Meeting.

### **Planning/Technical Update:**

Amy Edwards reported the following project status.

- Technical reports have been drafted for the west side alternatives.
- A database search on the GRIC alternatives is underway.
- The team is working on detail layouts of system interchanges on the westside.
- The team has met with Avondale/Tolleson to present 8 options for connecting to the 101.
- The GRIC video has been reviewed by Governor's office. A few more changes need to be made.
- A detailed environmental analysis of the alternatives is underway.

### **Biological Resources:**

Andrea Love, HDR, gave an overview of the status of the biological analysis.

- Staff has been collecting data for 2 years.
- HDR did a field analysis last summer.
- There are a number of habitats around South Mountain.
- There are not any threatened and endangered species except at Tres Rios, where there are some bird species.
- We have an ongoing dialogue with Arizona Game & Fish.
- No recommendations on mitigation at this time.
- ADOT shouldn't have to relocate any species except potentially the burrowing owl.

### **Comments/Questions:**

**Question:** What about the mountain lion study? **Response:** There isn't anything definite at this time.

**Comment:** There have been recent mountain lion sightings on South Mountain.

**Question:** What about Sonoran Desert Tortoise? **Response:** Once we have an alignment we will need to go look for burrows. They typically like rocky areas.

**Comment:** Laveen has 600 acres of (50% open space) conservation area between South Mountain and the river. We want to make sure all animals have access across the freeway.

**Question:** Does study look at if you build the highway what will be the impact of the future growth on the biology? **Response:** Yes.

**Question:** Are you studying resources on the GRIC? **Response:** Not at this time but have talked to their biologist. **Comment:** Tribal members have knowledge of the local animals and travel patterns.

**Comment:** The team will have to consider the wild horses on GRIC lands. **Response:** ADOT has built underpasses with dirt bottoms to mitigate for animal passage.

### **Residential/Business Relocations:**

Pete Enos, ADOT, discussed the process ADOT uses to acquire right-of-way.

- Process begins with the development of a Right of Way Plan & legal descriptions
- Next is an independent appraisal of the property. Determine the same value as if the property was sold on open market. Written offers are provided. If occupied go through relocation process. ADOT pays actual reasonable costs for moving, and relocation assistance is offered.
- Businesses are also reimbursed for relocation.
- If no agreement on the appraisal, go through eminent domain process to take immediate possession. It concludes with a jury trial to determine value of the property.
- The process can be very complicated and most disagreements are on the property value.

**Question:** What if business is a church and no other equivalent facility or open area is available to build a new building in the same area. **Response:** It may be a partial take for parking only, but relocation will be difficult.

**Question:** The only functioning wells in Ahwatukee are in the right of way. **Response:** Try to get the wells to stay in location. If not, would have to try and drill new well. If someone has water rights they have to be replaced. There would have to be some type of replacement. May need to look at design changes for these areas to keep wells in place.

**Question:** Do you do anything for speculative development? **Response:** If we know where the alignment is going, we can purchase in advance.

**Comment:** If we get into a property we typically take the property unless a few feet for a sound wall.

**Question:** Since some right of way has already been acquired what would we do if it moves? **Response:** ADOT would consider site as excess land. ADOT would appraise and determine best use and sell at public auction.

**Comment:** Some land could be useful as a preserve.

**Question:** State Trust owns 620 acres in the area. We have heard they modified their plan to eliminate the freeway across the lands. Is there something to prevent it? **Response:** No, ADOT has to buy from State Trust any right of way.

**Question:** Allottee landowners have asked how right of way purchases are made on tribal lands. **Response:** It is difficult to find comps on Tribal lands. State would have to work with Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Tribe but value should be based on fair market value.

**Question:** How wide is the right of way at Loop 202 east of I-10? **Response:** 300-350 feet for standard. Interchanges right of way is wider: 450-500 feet plus.

## **Utilities:**

Vaughn Bennett, AMEC, provided an overview of the process used to identify utility locations.

- Use the Public Improvement Project Model
- There are 27 utilities in the area
- AMEC identified owner, type & size and sensitivity based on impacts.
- Database will be used to develop alternative design and matrix to use in the evaluation process.
- There are significant utilities in west segment
  - Railroad Tracks across 4 of the alternatives
  - A Fiber Optic Cable crosses 4 of the alternatives
  - SRP has numerous power lines.
  - 42" sewer lines could be impacted.

**Question:** What about future utility corridors? **Response:** We request information from the utilities, but they usually don't release that information.

**Question:** What about community (HOA) utilities? **Response:** Unless on municipality record won't have information but would like to have the information.

**Question:** What about City of Phoenix water line crossing Pecos? **Response:** We have the information.

**Question:** Is there a scenario that there are so many number ones that it becomes a no-build? **Response:** Could be if the impacts are great.

**Question:** Who pays for relocations? **Response:** If the utility was there first, they have prior rights and ADOT pays.

## **Next Meeting:**

- April 22, 2004
- Theresa Gunn and John Godec will find new location for the meeting.